



State Representative **Connie Ladenburg**

Spring 2012 Report to the 29th Legislative District

South Tacoma, East Lakewood, Parkland

Spring 2012

2012

State Representative **Connie Ladenburg**

(D) 29th Legislative District

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- Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness
(Vice Chair)
- General Government Appropriations
& Oversight
- Education
- Transportation

Dear Friend,

Thank you so much for taking time in your day to review my *Spring 2012 Report to the 29th Legislative District*.

Inside you'll find a succinct overview of several issues that captured the biggest portion of my legislative attention this year.

Committee-assignments, of course, took up a good-sized chunk of my Olympia hours. My four committees, particularly the Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Committee for which I serve as Vice Chair, certainly addressed a wide variety of diverse topics. The operating-budget debate, the marriage-equality discussion, the government-reform legislation — these and a handful of other matters also garnered their fair share of time and consideration.

Before I dive into my report, let me emphasize that I hope you always feel free to contact me whenever you have comments or questions. Annette Swillie, my legislative assistant, and I look forward to your calls, letters, e-mails, and visits. Don't hesitate to get involved in the legislative process. ***It is, after everything is said and done, your legislative process.***

I do hope we cross paths around our neighborhoods soon! Take care — and very good wishes to you and yours for a great summer!

Best,

Connie Ladenburg
State Representative
29th Legislative District

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*** Curbing youth gangs:**

Measure is meant to channel kids away from criminal activities

We simply must help young people break the criminal cycle before it breaks them. It's the right thing to do — for the kids, to be sure, and also for our own safety and peace of mind. I prime-sponsored successful, bipartisan legislation to help Washington communities carry out this important mission.

We want to encourage establishment of juvenile-gang courts in counties that wish to pursue such a strategy. The measure steers a calculated, collaborative route in doing away with juvenile gangs.

A youth-gang court is a strategy that our communities, working through superior courts in their counties, can put right to work to rescue our kids and our neighborhoods from a nightmare. Juvenile-gang activities in localities of all sizes are a threat to public safety, as well as being a terrible, dangerous menace for so many children themselves. We need to do everything we

can to bring our kids back from the awful precipice of youth crime.

Many Washington counties are currently operating “problem-solving” courts for specific offenders, including mental-health courts, drug courts, and DUI courts. Right now, most of these courts deal only with adult offenders. Our 2012 legislation:

- ◆ Authorizes counties to establish and operate juvenile-gang courts, in which young offenders who have been involved in criminal gangs will be unceasingly supervised while they receive appropriate services.
- ◆ Provides that a young person must meet basic requirements for admission to a juvenile-gang court.
- ◆ Allows counties to set stricter standards for admission and continuing participation in the gang court.
- ◆ Requires that counties operating

juvenile-gang courts must keep track of information on participants, and that the state Administrative Office of the Courts must report recidivism information to the Legislature.

Yakima County is the lone Washington county that has developed a gang court specifically for juvenile offenders. Originated in 2011, it's the nation's first such court. Sentencing is deferred for a year, but even if the young offender completes every requirement, the case isn't dismissed. Potentially in such a case, the court might impose a more lenient sentence.

Yakima County's gang court stresses that the juvenile-gang-court judge, the use of evidence-based programs, and the coordination of services will work together in a **team approach**. It underscores accountability on the part of juveniles involved in the process, as well as involvement by their parents and community participation.

*** Capital-budget projects:**

STAR Center is working to bring even better services to our community

Our state's supplemental 2011-2013 capital budget includes important funding help for the South Tacoma Activity & Recreation (STAR) Center. Centrally located, the STAR campus will attract people from Lakewood, University Place, Fircrest, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, and other Tacoma communities.

I knew it was important to round up strong backing for this funding in the capital budget.

The STAR folks are planning to combine the picnic/event pavilion with the children's playground, and then a little later work on the sprayground. The picnic/event pavilion will include a covered space for the very successful South Tacoma Farmers Market. What that means is job-creation, a wonderful economic engine for the business district — and healthy local food, to boot!

Work is commencing on the new, regional 75-acre community complex to bring multiple programs and services to the South

Tacoma region. This new urban complex will include elements maintained by Metro Parks Tacoma, such as a community center, a sports complex, an outdoor-adventure multiplex, and trails systems. The work is a partnership with the Tacoma Public Schools' new Gray Middle School and the Boys and Girls Club Topping Regional Hope Center. Further, a proposed Sound Transit Center would be located just two blocks away.

With state funds and excellent support from Tacoma residents through a 2005 bond measure, this regional center also boasts a community hall and stage, foyer and gallery space, fitness studio, coffee shop and juice bar, kitchen, and indoor/covered playground with party rental rooms.

The next construction-phase will launch the outdoor amenities as a way to bring even stronger services to our community. These features will also include a picnic/event

pavilion, providing folks in the area a new venue for the wonderful farmers market nestled between the playground and the community garden.

Continued efforts to clean up Wapato Lake

Another capital-budget item converts two deteriorating streets into low-impact, green streets. This project is concerned with two different approaches:

- 1) Asotin Court — a reduced pavement section, intermittent parking, porous sidewalks, and rain gardens.
- 2) Wapato Lake Drive — porous pavement, which reduces contaminant loading and runoff to Wapato Lake.

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* Anti-child-pornography bill:

We mustn't tolerate any further reproduction of these vile materials

This next legislative issue I'll review today involves common sense — just plain old common sense! Going into session, I wanted a new law on the books that will prohibit the copying or creation of additional child pornography during the discovery process in a child-pornography trial. Our state shouldn't sanction any further reproduction of this despicable material in court cases.

Here's a key piece of backstory. A Washington State Supreme Court decision five years ago, *Washington v. Boyd*, requires that the defense in a child-pornography case must be allowed access to photographs depicting children in sexually explicit conduct. So, sometimes during the discovery process in criminal cases today, the state is actually compelled to copy child pornography and even make more copies of it.

Federal law on the books since 2006 bars the duplication and distribution of child pornography during the fact-finding part of *a federal trial*. Courts have consistently upheld the constitutionality of the federal law, and we have a moral, fundamental obligation to do everything in our power *in our state* to halt any repeated exploitation of children.

My successful, bipartisan bill this year spells out new, specific Washington law regarding child-pornography cases:

- ♦ The material can be examined by the defense, but it must remain in the actual custody of law enforcement or the courts.
- ♦ A mirrored hard drive can be made available for expert-examination by the

defense if the court determines that such examination is entirely justified.

- ♦ When it isn't any longer needed for the trial, the child pornography in question will be destroyed.

As a parent of five children and grandparent of 10, my heart goes out to children who have been victims of child pornography. It is one of the worst crimes that can be committed against children, and it has lasting, devastating effects. Having any of these terrible pictures copied yet again, and viewed by anyone yet again, is unacceptable.

We cannot let children be harmed any more than they already have been. This bill protects children from further victimization in child-pornography cases.

* National Guard folks:

Protection for people called up in response to statewide emergencies

It simply stands to reason and common sense that all National Guard members who are summoned to important service should be respected *equally*. Certainly, National Guard men and women called up by the governor for state-emergency service should be respected every bit as much as National Guard and reserve members called to service by the president.

This session, we amended the appropriate state law — the Washington Service

Members' Civil Relief Act — to make sure it applies to National Guard members called to service by the governor for a period of more than 30 consecutive days.

Before this legislation, National Guard members mustered to state active-duty status were not covered with the same protection under either the federal or state act. The bill provides the same protection for National Guard folks when the governor calls them up in times of a statewide

emergency to protect our Washington citizens.

These men and women can be called up for an extended period of time. Plus, during their selfless duty-service in our behalf and for our protection, they're often earning far less pay than their civilian salaries! They face the very same difficulties as active-duty members in responding to legal and other matters when they are called up to active duty — and they should receive the same respect and protections.

* Transportation budget:

Continued work to upgrade our over-capacity infrastructure

Funding for the Joint Base Lewis-McChord Interchange Justification Reports (IJRs) is included in our state's supplemental 2011-2013 transportation budget. I was proud to win support for this very needed investment. Although the modification of the intersections is very much a regional issue, you certainly don't need to be a highway-engineer to figure out that Interstate 5 is a vital corridor for our whole state.

Our region has grown so much, especially in the last 10 years. But no, our highway-capacity simply hasn't kept up; it hasn't really been significantly upgraded since the 1970s. There are 150,000 trips through the base gates every day. Unfortunately, the needed projects are not "shovel-ready." The IJRs are necessary so that the appropriate planning and environmental work can be carried out,

and so that the project can compete at the national level for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery funding.

The State Route 167 extension to the Port of Tacoma will also receive financial assistance for planning.

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* **Multi-unit housing:**

Fiscal assistance and a very big economic-development boost near PLU

Another successful measure this year promises to bring some very positive outcomes, and from a very good variety of perspectives, in the Parkland community.

Specifically, the legislation extends the property-tax exemption for multi-unit housing in the area of Pacific Lutheran

University. The bill is a great boon for a multi-unit housing-development project. We're talking about the creation of more than 100 jobs and \$1.4 million in sales-tax revenues.

The project will convert tax-exempt property into full-value commercial property.

This conversion will result in \$350,000 of property taxes after the tax-abatement is complete. The project will provide approximately 100 housing units, as well as much-needed low-income housing for a good many of our Pierce County neighbors.

* **Kudos for our local educators:**

Tacoma Public Schools acclaimed for their bold and creative innovations

Here's news of some special, much-deserved honors for many of our local educators.

The state Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction reports that a selected group of Washington schools implementing "bold, creative and innovative" ideas, including several of our very own Tacoma Public Schools, have won distinction as being among the new "Washington Innovative Schools." A good many Tacoma Public Schools were singled out for inclusion among these distinguished schools celebrated as being among the state's most inventive and exciting school models.

As a matter of fact, 12 of the 20 schools from around Washington honored as Innovative Schools are from Tacoma Public Schools! They are: Baker Middle School,

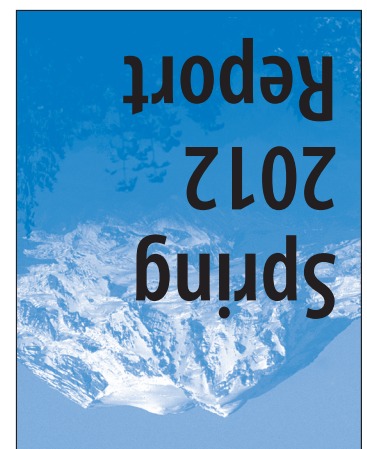
First Creek Middle School, Stewart Middle School, Science and Math Institute (SAMi), School of the Arts (SOTA), Lincoln Center, Geiger Montessori, Bryant Montessori, Foss High School, Giaudrone Middle School, McCarver Elementary School and Stanford Elementary School. Plus, Tacoma Public Schools was also named an Innovative District.

The program places a priority on schools that set their sights on emphasizing the arts, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, as well as partnering with business, industry, and higher education. Schools so revered are singled out for highlighting project-based and hands-on learning for their students.

"I support teachers and administrators

doing what it takes to make kids ready for a career or college," state Superintendent Randy Dorn said. "I strongly encourage schools to be bold and creative when finding solutions that work for kids."

"Innovation is part of the Tacoma brand," according to Tacoma Public Schools Superintendent-Elect (Interim) Carla Santorno. "We decided we want to provide the opportunity for more of our schools to pursue innovations that offer our community even greater options for academic achievement. We're working to build a strong program evaluation process so we can determine what programs work and which ones need improvement. We're excited about the opportunity to offer more of our schools the freedom to be creative."



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